



Nudging social tenants: effects, ethics and evaluation of behavioural insights in housing

ESRC DTP Collaborative Studentship

University of Birmingham and Collaborative Change

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). One of 14 such partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham.

The University of Birmingham as part of Midlands Graduate School is now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Studentship in association with our collaborative partner, [Collaborative Change](#), to commence in October 2018.

This ESRC 1+3 Collaborative Studentship addresses an urgent need identified by political geographers for research which examines in detail the effects, ethics and evaluation strategies of behavioural public policy (BPP). The specific aim of the project is to empirically demonstrate the impact of behavioural public policy in social housing. By undertaking a comparative study of the UK and the Netherlands, the project outlines how the 'problem' of social housing, affordability, tenant behaviour is framed in different contexts, and in light of wider European welfare discourses of responsabilization and financialisation. It examines what methods of evaluation and evidence bases are being used to assess the impact of behavioural change interventions, and will collect new qualitative data on the experiences of social housing tenants involved in behavioural experiments. The research asks whether BPP has uneven effects on already disadvantaged social groups who are often the target of such interventions, despite the purportedly universal nature of cognitive 'failures'.

The successful candidate will be based in Birmingham, but will work directly with Collaborative Change, a UK based design consultancy, on planning, delivery and evaluation of their social housing behavioural interventions in the Greater Manchester region, and the research will involve also fieldwork in the Netherlands. The candidate will be supervised by Dr Jessica Pykett, Professor Andrew Lymer and Dr James Gregory. They will benefit from membership of both the [Embodied Geographies](#) research group in the [School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences](#), and the [Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management](#) (CHASM) in the [School of Social Policy](#).

Candidates who are interested in this topic should have a first degree (1st or 2:1) in a Social Science discipline (e.g. geography, sociology, anthropology, psychology, social policy, politics, urban studies). There is the option to enter via the Masters in Social Research (the 1+3 route) or directly onto the PhD programme if the candidate already holds a suitable Masters qualification (+3 route).

Application Process

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Collaborative Studentship application form [available online here](#), a cover letter and a CV, and along with two references email this to g.coldicott@bham.ac.uk.

Application deadline: Monday 19th February 2018

Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP

Our ESRC studentships cover fees and maintenance stipend and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available only to successful applicants who fulfil eligibility criteria. To check your eligibility, visit: www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/.

Informal enquiries about the research or the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences prior to application can be directed to Dr Jessica Pykett at j.pykett@bham.ac.uk.